



A security camera captured the muzzle flash of the shot that killed Norfolk police Officer Victor Decker. His murder has been a notorious whodunit for seven years.

Death came in a flash



Dawn Decker, pictured with Victor Decker, believes her husband's killer is still on the loose - despite what prosecutors say.

DAY 1 CHAPTER 1

Hear the voices This series is an adaptation of The Shot, a Virginian-Pilot podcast now available on iTunes and other media players. The podcast, documents, video and photos can also be found at PilotOnline.com/TheShot.

By Gary Harki and Joanne Kimberlin The Virginian-Pilot

VIRGINIA BEACH IF NOTHING else, the killer was efficient. Capable of taking down a young, fit, police officer. Shoving a pistol barrel against his forehead. Dispatching him with a single shot, the crack muffled by rumbling thunder and the victim's own skull. Clouds masked the full moon that night. A light rain fell. If it wasn't the perfect crime, it was close enough. After seven years, the murder of Victor Decker stands out as the only unsolved cop killing in Hampton Roads. No eyewitnesses. No useful evidence. Done and gone in seconds. There's a video, filmed by a security camera on a guard shack at a back entrance to Naval Air Station Oceana. It's silent and grainy. Black, white and gray. Spider webs cling to the lens and stir in the wind. The camera looks out a long driveway, across Oceana Boulevard and into the darkness of a city-run borrow pit - one of those places where construction crews dig fill. To find the crime, you have to peer into that blackness. Ignore the lightning. Wait for the timestamp on the bottom of the video to tick just past 2 a.m. Then you see it: a burst of light near the ground. That's it. A muzzle flash. The death of a Norfolk police officer many called a hero. A 25-year-old who knew how to handle himself under fire. A husband and father - with secrets of his own. Seven seconds after the muzzle flash, a car pulls away from the pit, detectable only by its tail and headlights. The FBI believes that's the killer's escape. It's the last thing the video offers about what happened that night. The aftermath of the killing - the investigation, the near-trial, the rumors - has gone on for all these years in much the same way: murky, frustrating, cloaked in shadows. Maybe prosecutors are right - that they've got Decker's killers locked up for other crimes. But maybe not. See THE SHOT, PAGE 15



Children's Revolutionary War history club brings past to present. Page 3

Two dramedies figured out Gen X's greatest gift to society: Grouchiness. Sunday Break

Richard Dreyfuss accused of sexual harassment, George Takei of sexual assault. Page 8



Virginia Tech falls to Georgia Tech in stinging second straight loss. Sports

LIBERTY TAX | JOHN T. HEWITT



STEPHEN M. KATZ THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT

Internal review: Ex-CEO likely had sex in office and dated employees

By Kimberly Pierceall The Virginian-Pilot VIRGINIA BEACH How is it that the founder and head of a company could be fired by a board he controlled? It happened to John T. Hewitt, the former CEO of Liberty Tax, earlier this year. At the time, Hewitt and company officials gave no details as to why Hewitt was ousted by his own board. The Virginian-Pilot has learned that Hewitt was fired after the Liberty Tax board received the findings of an extensive internal review conducted by a high-powered law firm. The review was initiated to look

into claims that Liberty employees heard Hewitt having sex in his office. During the review, the scope was expanded to include other allegations: that Hewitt gave preferential treatment to employees and franchisees he was believed to be involved with romantically, and that he placed his personal interests above the company's. After two months of interviewing Liberty employees, the firm's report concluded that there was "credible evidence" that the main allegations against Hewitt were "likely" true. The Virginian-Pilot obtained a See LIBERTY TAX, PAGE 16 Liberty Tax CEO John T. Hewitt was fired in September after complaints to human resources prompted an outside investigation of his behavior around the office, including several claims that he was heard having sex in his office, that he likely had romantic relationships with employees he treated preferentially and that he put his interests above the company's.

Man's home gun business approved despite opposition. Beach council had no choice.

By Mary Beth Gahan The Virginian-Pilot VIRGINIA BEACH In mid-October, the City Council faced a tough decision. A man was seeking permission to run a home business near Shore Drive where gun buyers would go to pick up weapons they ordered online. Several neighbors said they were worried for their safety. Residents presented a petition with dozens of signatures in opposition. "We don't know who is coming to pick them up," said Laura Maxson, who lives in the area. "You just don't know what you're going to have in and out of your neighborhood." None of that seemed to matter. The issue was already decided. See BUSINESS, PAGE 16

It's really our obligation to respect that law, and we're obligated by our oath to apply it, independent of our personal views. John Moss, councilman

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